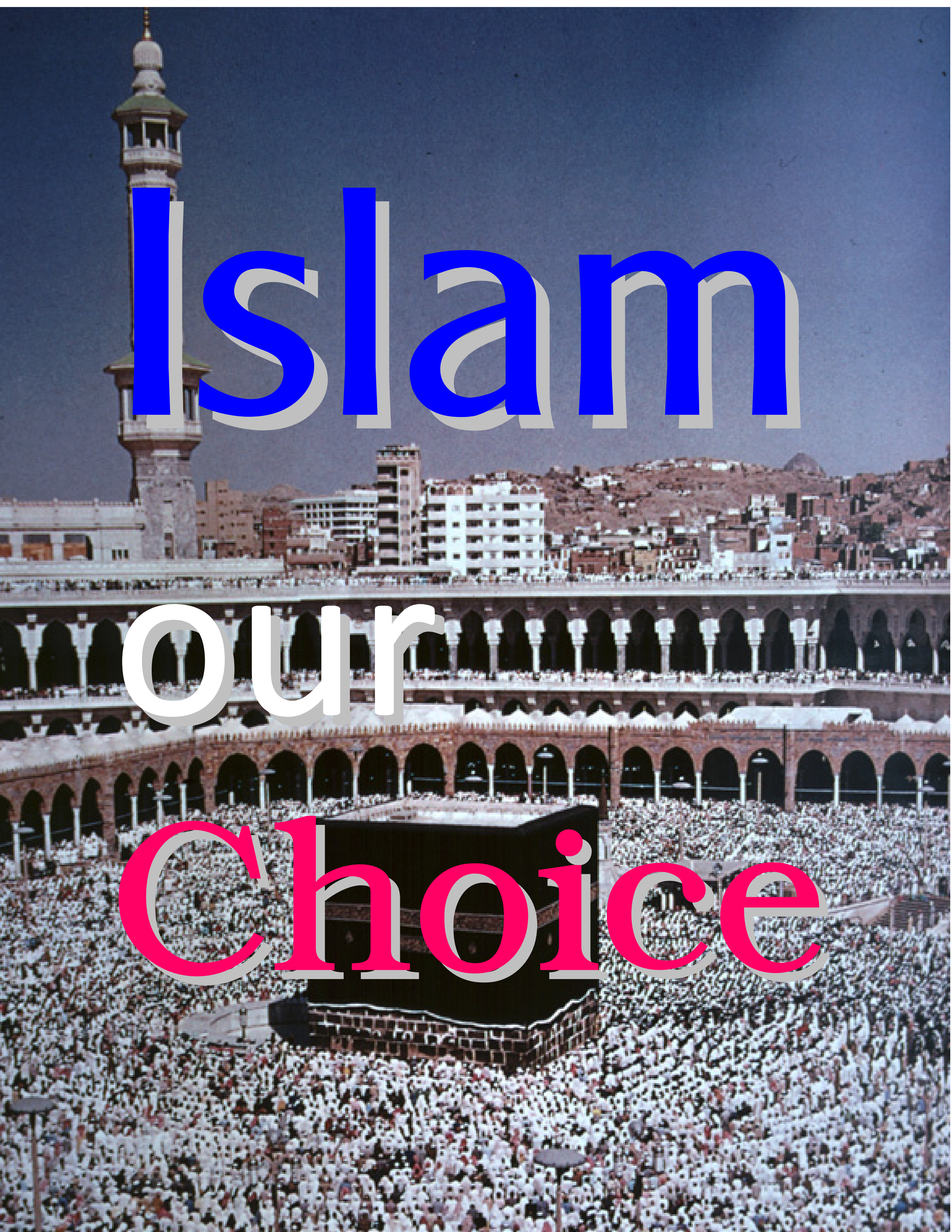

Islam
our
Choice

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PREFACE

Islam has been the faster growing faith in contemporary history. Historically before it could reach Madina, it already traveled into the heart of Africa. It attracted followers from Persia, Rome, Ethopia and Masopotamia with varying ethnic origins, diverse languages and different socio-cultural backgrounds. The community inter-acted together in a way that not withstanding all diversities it becomes one composite whole.

This transformation of feelings, understanding and responses is a unique Islamic contribution. Once they joined the community of Islam they left for once and for all their cultural, ethnic or linguistic biases. Islam emerged as the single unifying force which cemented together their hearts and minds. This movement of Islam has continued for past 15 centuries and attracted people from so many backgrounds to join hands against all kinds of evils, and for propagation and realization of the ultimate truth.

In the following brief statements from people who at one time belonged to various religious and cultural backgrounds are collected together. It will be more in the fitness of things to call these seekers for truth 'reverts' instead of converts.

We are thankful to our brothers, The Muslims Converts' Association of Singapore who collected the material together. We hope this information will help many seekers of truth to share in the noble experiences of these individuals and share with them in rethink their own positions in life.

SIR JALALUDDIN LAUDER BRUNTON
(ENGLAND)
STATESMAN AND BARNET

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity of saying a few words as to why I embraced Islam. I was reared under the influence of Christian parents. At an early age I became interested in theology. I associated myself with the Church of England, and took an interest in Mission work without an actual active part in it. Some years ago I gave my attention to the doctrine of "Eternal Torment" of all mankind except a few elect. It became so abhorrent to me that I almost became a septic. I reasoned that, a God that would use His power to create human being whom He foreknew and predestinated should be Eternally Tormented, could be neither wise, just, nor loving. His standard would be lower than that of many men. I continued, however, to believe in the existence of God, but was not willing to accept the commonly understood teachings of God's revelation of Himself to men. I then turned my attention to the investigation of other religions, only to fell myself baffled.

An earnest desire to worship and serve the True God grew in me. The creeds of Christianity claim to be founded on the Bible, but I found these to be conflicting. It is possible that Bible and the teaching of Jesus Christ had been misrepresented? So, I turned my attention again to the Bible and determined to make a careful study, I felt that there was something wanting.

I determined to strike out for myself ignoring the creeds of men. I began to teach that men possessed a "Soul" and an "Unseen Force" which was immortal, that sins were punished both in this world and in the next, that God in His Goodness and Mercy was ever ready to forgive our sins if we only were truly repentant.

Realizing the necessity of living up to the Truth and digging deep, so that I may find the "pearl of great price". I again devoted my time to the study of Islam. There was something in Islam which appealed to me at this time. In an obscure and almost unknown corner of the village of Ichhra I was devoting my time and service to God's glory amongst the lowest classes of society with the earnest desire to uplift them to the knowledge of the True and only God, and to instill a feeling of brotherhood and cleanliness.

t is not my intention to tell you as to how I laboured amongst these people, nor what were the sacrifices I had undertaken nor the extreme hardships I had undergone. I was simply going on with a singleness of purpose to benefit these classes both physically and morally.

I eventually took up the study of the life of Prophet Muhammad. I knew very little of what he did, but I knew and felt that the Christians with one voice condemned the celebrated Prophet of Arabia. I was now determined to look into the matter

without the spectacles of bigory and malice. After a little time I found that it was impossible to doubt the earnestness of his search for Truth and God.

I felt that it is wrong, in the extreme, to condemn this Holy Man after reading his great achievements for humanity. People who were wild idol-worshippers, living in crime, filth and nakedness, he taught them how to dress, filth was replaced by cleanliness, and they acquired personal dignity and self-respect, hospitality became a religious duty, their idols were destroyed and they worship the True and only one God. Islam became the most powerful Total Abstinence Association in the world. And many other good works were accomplished which are too numerous to be mentioned. In the face of all this and his own purity of mind, how sad to think that such a Holy Messenger of God should be run down by the Christians. I became deeply thoughtful, and during my moments of medication an Indian gentleman named Mian Amiruddin came on a visit, and strangely enough it was he who fanned the fire of my life into a flame. I pondered over the matter a great deal brought one argument after the other bearing upon the Christian's present day religion and I concluded in favor of Islam, feeling convinced of its truth, simplicity, toleration, sincerity and brotherhood.

I have now but a little time to live upon this earth and I mean to devote my all to Islam.

PROF. ABDUL AHAD DAWUD B.D.
(FORMER BISHOP OF URMIAH)
FORMERLY THE REVEREND DAVID BENJAMIN KELDANI, B.D.

My conversion to Islam cannot be attributed to any cause other than the gracious direction of Almighty God. Without this Divine guidance, all learning, searching and other efforts to find the truth may even lead one astray. The moment I believed in the Absolute Unity of God, His Holy Apostle Muhammad became the pattern of my conduct and behavior.

I have not the slightest intention or desire to hurt the religious feelings of Christian friends. I love Christ, Moses and Abraham, as I do Muhammad and all other Holy Prophets of God.

Qur'an, III 83, "Say: We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ismael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the Prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit".

My writings are not intended to raise a bitter and therefore useless dispute with the churches, but only invite them to a pleasant and friendly investigation of this all-important question with a spirit of love and impartiality. If the Christians desists from their vain attempt of defining the essence of the Supreme Being, and confess His absolute Oneness, then a union between them and the Muslims is not only probable but extremely possible. For once the unity of God is accepted and acknowledged; the other points of difference between the two faiths can more easily be settled.

It would be a mere waste of time here to refute those who ignorantly or maliciously suppose the Allah of Islam to be different from the true God and only a fictitious deity of Muhammad's own creation. If the Christian priests and theologians knew their Scriptures in the Original Hebrew instead of in translations as the Muslims read their Qur'an in its Arabic text, they would clearly see that Allah is the same ancient Semitic name of the Supreme Being who revealed and spoke to Adam and all the Prophets.

Allah is the only self-existing, Knowing, Powerful Being, He compasses, fills every space, being and thing; and is the source of all life, knowledge and force. Allah is the unique Creator, Regulator and Ruler of the universe. He is Absolutely One. The essence, the person and nature of Allah are absolutely beyond human comprehension, and therefore any attempt to define His essence is not only futile but even dangerous to our spiritual welfare and faith; for it will certainly lead us into error.

The Trinitarian branch of the Christian Church, for about seventeen centuries, has exhausted all the brains of her saints and philosophers to define the Essence and the Person of the Deity; and what have they invented? All that which Athanasiuses, Augustines and Aquinases have imposed upon the Christians "under the pain of eternal damnation"—to believe in a God who is "the third of three"! Allah, in His Holy Quran, condemns this belief in these solemn words:—

"They are certainly unbelievers, who say God is the third of three, for there is no God but the one God; and if they refrain not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall surely be inflicted on such of them as are unbelievers" (Qur'an, V. 73).

The attributes of God are not to be considered as distinct and separate diving entities or personalities, otherwise we shall have, not one trinity of persons in the Godhead, but several dozen of trinities. An attribute, until it actually emanates from its subject has no existence. We cannot qualify the subject by a particular attribute before that attribute has actually proceeded from it and is seen. Hence we say "God is Good" when we enjoy His good and kind action; but we cannot describe Him—properly speaking—as "God is Goodness", because goodness is not God, but His action and work. It is for this reason that the Qur'an always attributes to Allah the adjectival appellations, such as the Wise, the Knowing, the Merciful, but never with such descriptions as "God is love, knowledge, word," and so forth; for love is the action of the lover and not the lover himself, just as knowledge or word is the action of the knowing person and not himself.

The first verse with which St. Johns Gospel commences was often refuted by the early Unitarian writers, who rendered its true readings as follows: "In the beginning was the words; and the word was with God; and the Word was God's."

It will be noticed that the Greek form of the genitive case "Theou," i.e., "God's" was corrupted into "Theos"; that is, "God," in the nominative form of the name! It is also to be observed that the clause. "In the beginning was the word" expressly indicates the origin of the word which was not *before the beginning!* by the "word of God" is not meant a separate and distinct substance, coeval and co-existent with the Al-mighty, but an expression and proclamation of His knowledge.

The Christian auspicatory formula: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," does not even mention the name of God! And this is that Christian God! The Christian Trinity—in as much as it admits a plurality of persons in the Deity, attributes distinct personal properties to each person; and makes use of family names similar to those in the pagan mythology—cannot be accepted as a true conception of the Deity. Allah is neither the father of a son nor the son of a father. He has no mother, nor is He self-made. The belief in "God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost" is a flagrant denial of the unity of God, and an audacious confession in three imperfect beings who, unitedly or separately, cannot be the true God.

Then we are told that each person of the trinity has some particular attributes which are not proper to the other two. And these attribute which are not proper to the other two. And these attributes indicate—according to human reasoning and language—priority and posteriority among them. The Father always holds the first rank, and is prior to the Son. The Hoy Ghost is not only posterior as the third in the order of counting but even inferior to those from whom he proceeds. Would it not be considered a sin of heresy if the names of the three persons were conversely repeated? Will not be signing of the cross upon the countenance or over the elements of the Eucharist be considered impious by the Churches if the formula be reversed thus "In the name of the Holy Ghost, and of the Son, and of the Father"? For if they are absolutely equal and coeval, the order of precedence need not be so scrupulously observed.

The truth is that there is no mathematical exactitude, no absolute equality between the three persons of the Trinity. If the Father were in ever respect equal to the Son or the Holy Spirit, as the unit I is positively equal to another figure I, then there would necessarily be only one person of God and not three, because a unit is not a fragment or fraction nor a multiple of itself. The very difference and relationship that is admitted to exist between the persons of the Trinity leaves no shadow of doubt that they are neither equal to each other nor are they to be identified with one another. The Father begets and is not begotten; the Son is begotten and not a father; the Holy Ghost is the issue of the other two persons; the first person is described as creator and destroyer; the second as savior or redeemer, and the third as life-giver. Consequently none of the three is alone the creator, the Redeemer and the Life-giver. Then we are told that the second person is the Word of the first Person, becomes man and is sacrificed on the cross to satisfy the justice of his father, and that his incarnation and resurrection are operated and accomplished by the third person.

In conclusion, I must remind Christians that unless they believe in the absolute unity of God, and renounce the belief in the three persons, they are certainly unbelievers in the true God. Strictly speaking, Christians are polytheists, only with this exception, that the gods of the heathen are false and imaginary, whereas the three gods of the Churches have a distinct character, of whom the Father—as another epithet for Creator—is the One true God, but the son is only a prophet and servant of God, and the third person one of the innumerable holy spirits in the service of the Almighty God.

COL. DONALD S. ROCKWELL
(U.S.A.)
(POET, CRITIC & AUTHOR)

The simplicity of Islam, the powerful appeal and the compelling atmosphere of its mosques, the earnestness of its faithful adherents, the confidence inspiring realization of the millions throughout the world who answer the five daily calls to prayer—these factors attracted me from the first. But after I had determined to become a follower of Islam, I found many deeper reasons for confirming my decision. The mellow concept of life—fruit of the Prophet's combined course of action and contemplation—the wise counsel, the admonitions to charity and mercy, the broad humanitarianism, the pioneer declaration of woman's property rights—these and other factors of the teaching of the man of Mecca were to me among the most obvious evidence of a practical religion so tersely and so aptly epitomized in the cryptic words of Muhammad, "Trust in God and tie your camel". He gave us a religious system of normal action, not blind faith in the protection of an unseen force in spite of our neglect, but confidence that if we do all things rightly and to the best of our ability, we may trust in what comes as the Will of God.

The broadminded tolerance of Islam for other religions recommends it to all lovers of liberty. Muhammad admonished his followers to treat well the believers in the Old and New Testaments; and Abraham, Moses and Jesus are acknowledged as co-prophets of the One God. Surely this is generous and far in advance of the attitude of other religions.

The total freedom from idolatry…is a sign of the salubrious strength and purity of the Muslim faith.

The original teachings of the Prophet of God have not been engulfed in the maze of changes and additions of doctrinarians. The Qur'an remains as it came to the corrupt polytheistic people of Muhammad's time, changeless as the holy heart of Islam itself.

Moderation and temperance in all things, the keynotes of Islam, won my unqualified approbation. The health of his people was cherished by the Prophet, who enjoined them to observe strict cleanliness and specified fasts and to subordinate carnal appeties…when I stood in the inspiring mosques of Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Alger's, Tangier, Fez and other cities, I was conscious of a powerful reaction the potent uplift of Islam's simple appeal to the sense of higher things, unaided by elaborate trappings, ornamentations, figures, pictures, music and ceremonial ritual. The mosque is a place of quiet contemplation and self-effacement in the great reality of the One God.

The democracy of Islam has always appealed to me. Potentate and pauper have the same rights on the floor of the mosque, on their knees in humble worship. There are no rented pews or special reserved seats.

The Muslim accepts no man as a mediator between himself and his God. He goes direct to the invisible source of creation and life, God, without reliance on saving formula of repentance of sins and belief in the power of a teacher to afford him salvation.

The universal brotherhood of Islam, regardless or race, politics, colour or country, has been brought home to me most keenly many times in may life and this is another feature which drew me towards the Faith.

GOD FORGIVE ALL SINS

The Messenger of Allah said, "Do you think this woman will cast her own child into the fire? We said, "No." Then the Prophet said, "Verily God is more Compassionate unto His creatures than this woman unto her own child".

(Sayings of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.)

LADY EVELYN ZEINAB COBBOLD
(ENGLAND)

I am often asked when and why I became a Muslim. I can only reply that I do not know the precise moment when the truth of Islam dawned upon me. It seems that I have always been a Muslim. This is not so strange when one remembers that Islam is the natural religion that a child, left to itself, would develop. Instead as a Western critic once described it, 'Islam is the religion of common sense.'

The more I read and the more I studied, the more convinced I became that Islam was the most practical religion, and the one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness. Since then I have never wavered in my belief that there is but one God; that Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and other before (peace be on all of them) were prophets, divinely inspired, that to every nation God has sent an apostle, that we are not born in sin, and that we do not need any redemption, that we do not need anyone to intercede between us and God, Whom we can approach at all times, and that no one can intercede for us not even Muhammad or Jesus, and that our salvation depends entirely on ourselves, and on our actions.

The word 'Islam' means surrender to God. It also means peace. A Muslim is one who is 'in harmony with the decrees of the author of this world'. One who has made his peace with God and His creatures?

Islam is based on two fundamental truths: (a) the Oneness of God and (b) the Brotherhood of Man, and is entirely free from any encumbrances of theological dogma. Above every thing else it is a positive faith.

The influence of the Hajj cannot be exaggerated. To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the earth, on this sacred occasion and on the sacred spot, and to join with this mass of humanity, in all humanity, in the glorification of God, is to have one's consciousness impressed by the full significance of the Islamic ideal, is to be privilege to participate in one of the most soul inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birthplace of Islam, to tread the sacred ground of the Prophet's struggle to call erring humanity back to God, is to re-live those hallowed by the memories of Muhammad's long toil and sufferings in glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole earth. But this is not all. The Hajj, above everything else, makes for unity among Moslems. If there is anything that unifies the scattered forces of Islam and imbues them with mutual sympathy it is the pilgrimage. It provides them with a central point to which they rally from all corners of the earth. It creates for them annually an occasion to meet and know one

another, to exchange views and compare experiences and unite their various efforts to the common good. Distances are annihilated. Differences of sect are set aside. Divergences of race and colour cease to exist in this fraternity of faith that unities all Moslems in one great brotherhood and makes them conscious of the glorious heritage that is theirs.

KNOW THE LORD

Say: He is God,
The One and Only;
God, the Eternal, Absolute;
He begetteth not,
Nor is He begotten;
And there is none
Like unto Him.

(Ikhlas 112 : 1 – 4)

DR. R.L. MELLEMA

(HOLLAND)

ANTHROPOLOGIST, WRITER AND SCHOLAR

What is for me the Beauty of Islam?
What has attracted me to this faith?

I will try to give a short answer on these questions in 6 points.

1. The acknowledgement of One Supreme Being, uncomplicated and easy to accept by every reasonable thinking creature: Allah, He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor he begotten and none is like Him. He represents the highest wisdom, the highest strength and the highest beauty. His Charity and Mercy are unboundless.
2. The relation between the Creator of the Universe and His creatures, of whom man has been entrusted with the supreme direction, is a direct one. The believer does not need any mediation; Islam does not need priesthood. In Islam contact with God depends on man himself. Man has to prepare himself in this life for the next. He is responsible for his deeds, which cannot be compensated by a substituting sacrifice of an innocent person. No soul shall be burdened beyond its capacity.
3. The doctrine of tolerance of Islam, so clearly manifested in well-known words: There is no compulsion in religion. A Muslim is recommended to search for the truth where he may find it; also he is enjoined to estimate the good properties of other religions.
4. The doctrine of brotherhood of Islam, which extends to all human beings, no matter what colour, race or creed. Islam is the only religion which has been able to realize this doctrine in practice. Muslims wherever on the world they are, will recognize each other as brothers. The equality of the whole mankind before God is symbolized significantly in the Ihram-dress during the Hajj.
5. The fact that Islam accepts matter and mind both as existing values. The mental growth of man is connected inseparable with the needs of the body, whereas man has to behave in such a way that mind prevails over matter and matter is controlled by mind.
6. The prohibition of alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs. This is in particular a point in respect of which it may be said that Islam is far ahead of its time.

THE PROPHET SAYS:

Knowledge of God is my Capital;

Reason is the Root of my Faith;
Love is my Foundation;
Enthusiasm is my House;
Remembrance of God is my Friend
Firmness is my Treasure;
Sorrow is my Companion;
Science is my Weapon;
Patience is my Mantle;
Contentment is my Booty;
Poverty is my Pride;
Devotion is my Art;
Conviction is my Power;
Truth is my Redeemer;
Obedience is my Sufficiency;
Struggle is my Mannger; and
My Pleasure is in my Prayer.

(Sayings of Prophet Mohammad P.B.U.H.)

AYESHA BRIDGET HONEY
(ENGLAND)

Q. When did you embrace Islam and what was you age at that time?

Ans. Three and a half years back Allah illuminated me with the light of Islam. At that time I was 21 years old.

Q. Please tell us how you came to embrace Islam?

Ans. The family in which I was born and grew up was, from the religious point of view, no different from the generality of British homes. My mother is a Christian but she doesn't practice religious worship and rituals. In my childhood I studied at a religious school and learned the subjects which are taught in English Church Schools. Our usual conversation was never even remotely with religion. I don't remember any day of my childhood when I heard the name of God in my home.

While studying at the Church school, I was not satisfied with some of the basic beliefs of Christianity especially the concept of trinity and the belief in atonement that God or Jesus had ransomed the people and by accepting the cross had atoned for all their sins. I heard seemed to me only one side of the reality while I wanted to know fully. My school was a Christian school but I left it as a unbeliever.

I was infatuated with philosophy and my desire to knew the truth was intense. When at the age of 15, I read the book Tao Teh Ching which is a collection of early writings about Chinese philosophy of Tao, I was influenced by its thought. Then when I found some introductory information about Buddhism I decided to go into the depths of both these philosophical beliefs. I decided to learn Chinese and to go to China myself but this was no easy task for a 15 year old girl with no money or means. So when I was 17 years old I went to Canada where, working for 2 years, I collected enough money to continue my education. My program was to get the secondary school degree so that I could get admission in a university to learn the Chinese language.

In Canada in came to know that Hindu philosophy and read the holy books of Hindus. The three beliefs, that is: Tao Teh, Buddhism and Hinduism which I knew by now possessed beauty, profundity and exaltation but none of them could satisfy my mind or my feelings. In this vast universe and in daily life where people live together these faith totally failed to reach any stability or balance. They completely neglect some one aspect. The founder of the Tao philosophy wandered in remote corners of the world as a mystic and an ascetic. In search of truth Buddha left his wife and family. The books of the Hindu are basically ethical but are all human ideas of collective life in society only based on hallucination. This question bewildered me. I could not believe in any of these

faiths. After all what could I believe in? What is the purpose of life? Is it only a chance, an accident as some people says? The tension and restlessness grew and I could not sleep during nights.

In this way my success in the Secondary Examination and admission in London University to learn Chinese became meaningless for me. It is true that I fulfilled my desire to learn Chinese but the truth I had been searching for seemed still far away.

After joining the university I got the chance to be introduced to Muslims. Before that I had neither read nor heard anything about Islam. In fact like other people in the West, I also harboured prejudices and misunderstandings about it. But here in the university, Muslim students explained their basic beliefs to me calmly and in a very nice manner. They answered all my objectives and gave me some books to read. In the beginning I just skipped over the pages of these books when I had nothing to do. I only considered them a source of amusement and derision. But when I actually read parts of these books, they slowly reduced my suspicions about Islam.

Then I started reading those books carefully. There style of presentation and the freshness of explanation and commentary surprised me. I was extremely impressed by the logic and argument with their concepts of the Creator of the universe. This was my first *Salat (namaz)* and since that time by the grace of Allah I am a Muslim. I accepted Islam hardly three months after I came to know about it. So I did not know anything more than basic concepts. After that started a lengthy process of question which I asked my Muslim brothers and argued with them over the details and sections of these questions.

I am often asked about the main reasons which made me accept. It is difficult for me to give a satisfactorily answer to this because the example of Islam—as a European Muslim has put it—is like that of a complete and perfect geometrical pattern whose every part completes its other parts and its real beauty lies in the harmony and cohesion of these parts and it is this characteristic of Islam which has a profound influence on human beings. Seen from a distance Islam's deep insight into the generality of things, motives, deeds, its explanations about the Muslim government will amaze you and if you look at its details you find it an incomparable guide for social life based as it is on straight forward and true ethical values. A Muslim takes the name of Allah whenever he does anything. And when he remembers Allah he examines his own self and in this he tries to reach a high standard. In this way the gulf between daily life of the world and the demands of religion is bridged and both sides become proportionate, evenly balanced and essential for each other.

Q. After you accepted Islam what was the reaction of your family and your friends?

Ans. My parents did not pay much attention to my conversion to Islam. First they thought this was only a hobby horse of mine, somewhat like my desire to learn Chinese. Soon the enthusiasm would subside and as time passed the proved them to be wrong and my faith fortified to the extend that it was not limited to my thinking but extended it self for my habits and influenced and changed my way of life, then they started expressing their regrets. I caused them annoyance by abstaining from wine and pork. They disliked seeing me enveloped in my head covering (*dopatta)* and everywhere keeping it on my head. Actually I am convinced they were more concerned about people would say. They were not very concerned about faith and belief. However, my English friends were different. They had the ability to argue and debate and they were ready to accept anything proved rationally. When I discussed Islamic thought and its principles of social life they admitted its wisdom.

I remember once there was an argument with some friends about polygamy and the limits Islam has imposed on it. I compared it with the principles put forward by western civilization and they all agreed that polygamy limited by Islamic regulations is the best solution for married life.

Q. Did you face any difficulty or embarrassment after you accepted Islam?

Ans. People who have little ability to think are usually full of bigotry against Islam. They often make fun of Muslims. Even if they do not make fun of Muslims in front of them they deride them behind their backs. On the other hand they never tangle with the irreligious and the unbelievers. They in fact respect them for their so called "free thought" but Islam and Muslims irritate them. Inspite of this I did not meet with any difficulties worth mentioning. The reason for this was that I was a student of the University's Oriental and African Studies Institute and the people I met knew something of religions and beliefs. However, I am aware of what many other Muslims have to endure.

Q. After accepting Islam to what extend did you acquire knowledge?

Ans. My study of Islam is limited to the books which reached me. I also learned a lot by questioning Muslim scholars; I also gained a lot by arguing with Muslims of various areas. Last year I learned about Islamic thought and western philosophy from a Sudanese student. This student held a meeting every week in which 10 persons used to be present. Our method in this meeting was that we read important English translations of the Quran's and compared with the original Arabic Qur'an to determine the nearest possible meaning of each verse. Then in the light of various commentaries, especially Tabari's Tafsir we discussed the verse according to our own understanding. I am sorry to say that after the departure of our Sudanese brother there is no one in London who has such knowledge or the enthusiasm to carry on the work with the same constancy.

Q. Do you think Islam can influence modern civilization in any way? Please tell us in which way?

Ans. Today the western world is living in darkness. There is not even the slightest light of hope to show the way for the deliverance of the soul and the self. Any person who is aware of the actual state of European societies can see this universal restlessness and worry which is hidden behind the false glare of progress and material excellence. Now people are searching for a way out of their difficulties but they can see no way out. Their search is fruitless. There is only one choice before them and that is to go on advancing towards the hell of destruction and disaster. The beautiful harmony between the demands of the Body and the needs of the soul which Islam presents has strong attraction for the West today. Islam can show modern civilization the way which leads to the real purpose of life and persuade him to struggle for the pleasure of Allah. This would also ensure his success hereafter. May Allah grant us success in this life and the next?

Q. In your opinion what is the method of propagating and spreading Islam?

Ans. Before worrying about spreading Islam, it is necessary that in our life and needs we should attain the standard which this faith demands of us.

It is thought that if we become missionaries of Islam then we need not worry about anything else. It is necessary for us to know Islam fully and only then to become its missionaries so that we may be able to answer all questions and objections. No doubt the presence of certain books about Islam is useful in spreading its invitation. If we give a book to a non-Muslim he pays it more attention than he gives to debate or argument. But unfortunately there are very few good books on Islam in English. I would again stress the importance of a living example. Hence it is essential for us that we make ourselves the exemplary human beings as the Qur'an wants us to be.

Q. What are the special difficulties of British Muslims?

Ans. Where entire British families become Muslim they achieve the Islamic social life and life in peace. But when an unmarried boy or girl or a married man or woman singly accepts Islam they have to face difficulties. They have a constant feeling that British society and its General atmosphere is not their own. As they are not in an Islamic society they face hardships in saying their prayers and keeping fasts in time. The Islamic families are fulfilling their responsibilities in this respect. We also need teachers who should be examples of Islamic culture and should be able to help new Muslims in understanding the Qur'an. Many new Muslims want to understand the Qur'an properly but they have no means of doing this. I feel sorry while saying this that the Islamic Cultural Centre in London is not doing anything about this. This work depends only on students who do not have much time owing to their studies.

It is also necessary to mention the youths' adoration of the West's false nuggets. They have been decide by its binding glare and are unaware of its artificiality. Here I would also like to express my liking for the strong family bonds and the clean social life. If we compare it with the West's social life, it is comparatively

at ethical heights. If there were Islamic social life in the real sense how excellent it would be!

O Allah make us true Muslims according to the demands of Islam.

WELCOME TO PARADISE

Describing Paradise the Prophet said: "There is therein ever lasting health and thou will never be sick; and for thee there is everlasting life and thou wilt never die; and for thee there is perpetual youth and thou will never get old; and for thee there is everlasting bliss and thou will never be in want".

(Sayings of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.)

DR. YAHYA A.R. LEHMANN

(GERMANY)
DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY
(FORMER ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST)

Allahu Akbar, there is not God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.

I heard this call to worship the one God alone for the first time in my life from the minaret of the Al-Aqsa Mosque standing in the ancient temple square of Jerusalem. I had arrived in this city, sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, for the Easter pilgrimage, as a research fellow for special studies in the then recently discovered and deciphered Dead Sea Scrolls. I had spent most of the night hours after the Christian Good Friday celebrations praying and meditating in the Church of the Holy Sepulcre, and had witnessed the busy bickering of priests and clergymen of differing Christian Church denominations about precedence into the somber grave-chamber of Christ and about entrance-fees there payable by their respective flocks.

Surprising Encounter

After passing the gloomy Wailing Wall, old darkened stones, last relics of the former Herodean Temple, dear to the Jews during the long centuries of their dispersion under alien suppression, I slowly climbed up to the Holy Temple-Rock and its sacred precincts just before dawn. There I could observe groups of Palestinian Arabs freely responding to this early Adzan-call for morning worship, and I soon heard the solemn Arabic prayer-recitations of this devout congregation. The surprising encounter with this praying community of the greatest monotheistic world religion surrendering themselves to the one God and Creator in faithful worship was a deeply stirring experience.

A Deep Spiritual Experience

Of a sudden the morning—sun rose over the Mount of Olives casting a radiant glow of brightness over the magnificent golden Dome of the Rock. It struck a new chord in my heart; it was like a symbol of new light and insight ahead, and of still undiscovered realms of religious truth and spiritual experience. The deep impression of this moment has never since left me; it did encourage me during the difficult research task for my doctorate thesis on the Essenic influences in early Christianity and the canonical New Testimonial Writings; it guided me throughout my later work as priest and educationist here in Malaysia.

Allah the Greatest

Allahu Akbar, God alone is the greatest, even greater than the triune deity as professed by Christian dogma, in which I had been raised form childhood and which in later years of ecclesiastical studies I have been specially trained to proclaim, as a priestly member of a Roman Catholic Missionary Order.

A New Religious Message

The public declaration of the monotheistic faith of Islam from the minaret above the Jerusalem Temple sounded to me like a new religious message of great challenging force. Several years of postgraduate studies in the field of comparative Religion and special research of the Essenic Movement during the time of Jesus and its impact on the development of early Christianity, have led me convincingly into the radiant light and truth of Islam, bringing me closer to the original message of Jesus, the godsent man and Prophet of Nazareth who called his followers back onto the right religious way of the Jewish Prophets and patriarchs of old, like Abraham, surrendering themselves to the one and only God, Allah, Creator of all, and striving to establish in word and action real human brotherhood among their people.

The Living Islamic Truth

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been sent later by my religious superiors to Malaysia, where I could study and experience more thoroughly the all-comprehensive living truth of Islam as revealed to the last and greatest of Allah's messengers, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Be officially embracing Islam as the best fulfillment of the genuine Christian faith in the original Good Message (Gospel) of Jesus, for telling Allah's last universal Revelation through His greatest Messenger Muhammad in the Divine Word of the Holy Qur'an, I had to repay my heavy spiritual debt to the many Muslim friends of mine in this country, who encouraged me by their word and example to choose for myself the Islamic Truth as the most positive directive force to a fuller individual life in submission to Allah's guidance as well as towards the unification of mankind in fraternal fellowship and peace.

DEDICATION

To the Spirits of Truth, who all
Brought God's Message for Mankind.
Amongst them, Noah, Abraham,
Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John and
Jesus. Also the Last of the Prophets
Muhammad (peace and salutations on all of them—Ameen)
Say ye: We believe
In God, and the revelation
Given to us and to Abraham.
Ismael, Isaac, Jacob,
And the Tribes, and that given
To Moses and Jesus, and that given
To (all) Prophets from their Lord,
We make no difference
Between one and another of them
And we bow to God (in Islam).

(Al-Qur'an Sura II: 136)

DR. ALI SELMAN BENOIST

(FRANCE)

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

As a doctor of Medicine, and a descendant of a French Catholic family, the very choice of my profession has given me a solid scientific culture which had prepared me very little for a mystic life. Not that I did not believe in God, but that the dogmas and rites of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular never permitted me to feel His presence. Thus unitary sentiment for God forbade my accepting the dogma of the Trinity, and consequently of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Without yet knowing Islam, I was ready believing in the first part of the *Kalima, La ilah illa 'l-Lha* (There is but One God), and in these verses of the Qur'an:

"Say: He, the God, is One; God is an absolute unity; He never begot, nor was He begotten; and there is none equal to Him."

(Al-Qur'an CXII: 1-4)

So, it was first of all for metaphysical reasons that I adhered to Islam. Other reasons, too, prompt me to do that. For instance, my refusal to accept Catholic priests, who, more or less, claim to possess on behalf of God the power of forgiving the sins of men, Further I could never admit the Catholic rite of Communion, by means of the host (or holy bread), representing the body of Jesus Christ, a rite which seems to me to belong to totemistic practices of primitive peoples, where the body of the ancestral totem, the taboo of the living ones, had to be consumed after his death, in order better to assimilate his personality. Another point which moved me away from Christianity was the absolute silence which it maintains regarding bodily cleanliness, particularly before prayers, which has always seemed to me to be an outrage against God. For if He has given us a soul he has also given us a body, which we have no right to neglect. The same silence could be observed, and this time mixed with hostility with regard to the physiological life of the human being, whereas on this point Islam seemed to be the only religion in accord with human nature.

The essential and definite element of my conversion to Islam was the Qur'an. I began to study it, before my conversion, with the critical spirit of a Western intellectual, and I owe much to the magnificent work of Mr. Malek Bennabi, entitled *Le Phenomene Coranique,* which convinced me of its being divinely revealed. There are certain verses of this book, the Qur'an, revealed more than thirteen centuries ago, which teach exactly the same notions as the most modern scientific researches do. This definitely convinced me, and converted me to the second part of the *Kalima, 'Muhammad Al-Rasul 'al-Lah'* (Muhammad is the Messenger of God).

This was my reason for presenting myself on 20th February 1953 at the mosque in Paris, where I declared my faith in Islam and was registered there as a Muslim by the Mufti of the Paris Mosque, and was given the Islamic name of 'Ali-Selman'.

I am very happy in my new faith, and proclaim once again: “I bear witness that there is but one God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is God’s servant and Messenger.”

TO ALL TRUTH SEEKERS:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error: Whoever rejects evil and believers in God, hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks and God heareth and knoweth all things:”

(Al-Qur’an 2:256)

MAVIS B. JOLLY
(ENGLAND)

I was born in a Christian environment, baptized in the Church of England, and attended a Church school where at a tender age. I learned the story of Jesus as contained in the Gospels. It made a great emotional impression on me, as also did frequently visits to the church, the high altar with candles burning the incense, the robed priests and the mysterious intoning of prayers. I suppose for those few years I was a fervent Christian. Then with the increase of schooling, and being in constant contact with the Bible and everything Christian I had the opportunity to think over what I had read and observed, practiced and believed. Soon I began to be dissatisfied with many things.

By the time I left school I was a complete atheist. Then I began to study the other main religions in the world. I began with Buddhism. I studied with interest the eight fold path, and felt that it contained good aims but was lacking in direction and details.

In Hinduism I was faced not with three, but with hundreds of gods, the stories of which were too fantastic and revolting to me to be accepted.

I read a little of Judaism, but I had already seen enough of the Old Testament to realize that it did not stand my tests of what a religion must be. A friend of mine persuaded me to study spiritualism and to sit for the purpose of being controlled by the discarnate spirits. I did not continue this practice very long as I was quite convinced that, in my case anyway, it was purely a matter of self-hypnosis, and would be dangerous to experiment further.

The war ended. I took work in a London office, but my mind never strayed far from the religious quest. A letter appeared in the local paper to which I wrote a reply contradicting the divinity of Christ from the Biblical point of view. This brought me in contact with a number of people, one of whom was a Muslim. I started discussing Islam with this new acquaintance. On every point my desire to resist Islam fell down. Though I had thought it impossible, I had to acknowledge that perfect revelation had come through an ordinary human being, since the best of twentieth century governments could not improve upon that revelation, and were themselves continually borrowing from the Islamic system.

At this time I met a number of other Muslims and some of the English girl converts endeavored to help me, with no little success, since, coming from the same background; they understood better some of my difficulties. I read a number of books, including, *the religion of Islam, Muhammad and Christ and The Source of Christianity,* the latter showing the amazing similarities between Christianity and the old pagan myths, impressed me greatly. Above all I read the Holy Qur'an. At first it seemed mainly repetition. I was never quite sure if I was taking it in or not, but the Qur'an, I

found, works silently on the spirit. Night after night I could not put it down. Yet I often wondered how perfect guidance for man could come through imperfect human channels at all. Muslims made no claim for Muhammad that he was superhuman. I learned that in Islam prophets are men who have remained sinless, and that revelation was no new thing. The Jewish Prophets of old received it. Jesus, too, was a prophet. Still it puzzled me why it did not happen any more in the twentieth century. I was asked to look at what the Qur'an said: "Muhammad is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets." And of course it was perfectly reasonable, too. How could there be other prophets to come if the Holy Qur'an was the book…….explaining all things and varying that which is with you and if it was to remain uncorrupted in the world, as is guaranteed in the Qur'an, and perfectly kept so far? "Surely We have revealed the Reminder (i.e., the Qur'an) and surely We are its Guardian." In that case there could be no need of further prophets or books. Still I pondered. I read that the Qur'an is a guide to those who ponder (XVI: 65) and that doubters were asked to try and produce a chapter like it (II: 23). Surely, I thought, it must be possible to produce a better living plan in 1954, than this which dates back to a man in the year 570 C. E.? I set to work, but everywhere I failed.

No doubt, influenced by the usual condemnation of Islam from Christian pulpits on the subject, I picked on polygamy. At last I thought I had something; obviously Western monogamy was an improvement on this old system. I talked of it to my Muslim friend. He illustrated with the aid of newspaper articles how much true monogamy there was in England, and convinced me that are becoming so distressingly common in the West. My own common sense could see that, particularly after a war, when women of a certain age group far outnumber men, a percentage of them are destined to remain spinsters. Did God give them life for that? I recollect that on the radio program known as 'Dear Sir' an unmarried English girl had called for lawful polygamy, saying she would prefer a shared married life rather than the loneliness to which she seemed to be destined. In Islam no one is forced into a polygamous marriage, but in perfect religion, the opportunity must be there to meet those cases where it is necessary.

Then about ritual prayers I thought I had a point. Surely prayers repeated five times a day must become just a meaningless habit? My friend had a quick and illuminating answer. 'What about your music practice, he asked, where you do scales for half an hour every day whether you feel like it or not? Of course, it is not good if it becomes a dead habit—to be thinking of what is being done will give greater benefit—but even scales done without thinking will be better than not doing them at all, and so it is with prayers. 'Any music student will see the point of this, particularly if he bears in mind that Islam prayers are not said for the benefit of God, Who is above needing them, but for our own benefit as a spiritual exercise, besides other uses.

Thus gradually I became convinced of the truth in the teaching of Islam, and formally accepted the faith. I did this with great satisfaction, as I could fully realize that it was no emotional craze of moment, but a long process of reasoning, lasting nearly two years, through which I went despite my emotions that pulled me so strongly the other way.

TRUE KNOWLEDGE

Acquire knowledge. It enableth its possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lighteth the way of Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless; it guideth us to happiness; it sustaineth us in misery; it is an ornament amongst friends, and an armour against enemies.

(Sayings of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.)

FAUZUDDIN AHMAD OVERING

(HOLLAND)

PREACHER AND SOCIAL WORKER

It is difficult to say how my first interest in the Eastern world was aroused. It was purely linguistic at first. I started learning Arabic when still at the primary school, when I was about twelve or thirteen, some thirty years ago. But as I has no one to help me, I did not make much headway at first.

It goes without saying that by the study of Arabic I came into contact with Islam. I bought several books about it; though all were written by Western authors and, therefore, not always unbiased. I became convinced of the truth of the Prophet's mission (the peace and the blessings of God be on him). But my knowledge about Islam was rather restricted, and I had no one to guide me.

The book that influenced me most was E. G. Browne's *History of Persian Literature in Modern Times.* This brilliant work contains parts of two poems that were decisive for my conversion: the *Tar- Band* by Hatif of Isfahan, and the *Haft-Band* by Mohtashim Kashan.

At first Hatif's poem appealed to me most. It gives a beautiful visionary picture of a soul in turmoil, in a struggle for a higher conception of life, in which I discovered—on a lower level, of course—my own struggle for Truth. Although I cannot agree with some of its couplets, it taught me at least one great Truth:

There he is one, there is not but he,
That there is no God save him alone.

According to the wish of my mother, and in accordance with my own inclination, I went to a special school for religious instruction, not because I adhered to its religious principle (which admitted broadmindedness) but some knowledge of Christianity was thought necessary for a general education. I think the Principal of the School was rather surprised when at the end of the curriculum I handed in a composition in which I confessed my adherence to the Islamic faith.

My faith in those early days was, however, irrational. It was a conviction, which, though genuine, was yet armed by reason against the first onslaught of the rational materialism of the West.

It is then that the question arises: Why should one choose Islam! And why not maintain the religion in which one happens to be born (if any)! The answer is contained in the question itself: Islam means being at peace with oneself, the world and the God

that is, it consists in submission to the will of God. Though the beauty and majestic terseness of the Qur'an is lost in translation, I will quote God's own words:

"O soul that art at rest. Return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him. So enter among my servants. Enter my Garden—the Paradise."

(Al-Qur'an *LXXXIX: 27:30*)

Islam, therefore, is the only pure religion not a religion marred by mythology, like Christianity and other religions.

Compare the Christian doctrine that an infant is responsible for the sins of its forbearers, with God's consoling words:

"And no soul earns evil but against itself, and no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another". (Al-Qur'an *VI: 165*)

"We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability."

(Al-Qur'an *VII: 42*)

WHAT IS CHARITY?

Your smiling in your brother's face is charity; and your exhorting mankind to virtuous deeds is charity; and your prohibiting the forbidden is charity; and your showing men the road, in the land in which they lose it, is charity for you; and your assisting the blind, is charity for you.

(Sayings of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.)

PROF. UMAR MITA

(JAPAN)

ECONOMIST, SOCIAL WORKER AND PREACHER

By the Grace of Allah I am leading a happy Muslim life for the last 3 years. The righteous way of life as taught by Islam, was shown to me by our Pakistan *Tablighi* brethern (Missionaries), who visited my country and to whom I am deeply grateful.

The majority of our people are Buddhists, but they are Buddhists in name only. They are not practicing Buddhists and actually they are almost unmindful of their religious knowledge. The main reason for this apathetic attitude may be due to the fact that Buddhism presents a high sounding and complicated philosophy and give nothing practical. It is thus beyond the reach of an average person who remains busy with the problems of this worldly life. He cannot understand it nor can be implement it. It is not so with Islam. The teachings of Islam are simple, straight-forward and quite practical. It governs all the departments of human life. It moulds the thinking of man and when once the thinking becomes pure, pure actions will follows spontaneously. The teachings of Islam are so simple, easy and practical that every one can understand it. It is not the monopoly of the priests as in the case in other religions.

There is great future of Islam in Japan. Some difficulties may be there but the same are not insurmountable.

Firstly, an organized steady and vigorous effort should be made to acquaint people with the teachings of Islam. Our people are becoming materialistic day by day but they are unhappy. They have to be told that the real peace and contentment lie in Islam which is complete code for life and gives guidance for all walks of life.

Secondly such people are required to do this work whose own lives set an example before others.

Unfortunately the type of Muslim students who come to Japan from different Muslim countries are no example for us to follow and we cannot gain any advice or guidance from them. Most of them have adopted the Western way of life and they know nothing about Islam due to their being educated in the European established institutions.

If Islam is to succeed in Japan, as I am quite sure that one day it will, all Islam-loving people should think over the problem and make sincere and concentrated efforts in this behalf. Such of the Muslims who are true believers and whose lives can be an example to others, should visit Japan and teach the people here. Our people are thirsty for peace, truth, honesty, sincerity, virtue and all that is good in life, and I am confident that Islam and Islam alone can quench their thirst.

We need absolute Faith in Him to do the job and we pray to Him to grant Faith to us.

Islam means 'peace' and no other people than the Japanese require peace more. Real peace can come to us by accepting the religion of peace. Peace with all men and peace with God. The brotherhood in Islam is a unique principle and in it truly lies salvation for the mankind.

GOD LOVES YOU

A man came before the Messenger with a carpet, and said, "O Rasul: I passed through through a wood, and heard the voices of the young of birds; and I took and put them into my carpet; and their mother came fluttering round my head, and I uncovered the young, and the mother fell down upon them: then I wrapped them up in my carpet; and there are the young which I have." Then the Rasul said, "Put them down." And when he did so, their mother joined them' and Prophet Muhammad said. "Do you wonder at the affection of the mother towards her young? I swear by Him Who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His creatures than the mother to these young birds. Return them to place from which you took them, and let their mother be with them."

(Sayings of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.)

J. GILCREASE
(U.S.A.)
(FORMER BAPTIST CHURCH TEACHER)

The Search for Truth

I am a recent covert to Islam coming from a *Fundamental Baptist Church.* My Christian education had been from attending a Church for 20 years and from teaching children's Sunday school for approximately 10 years. After these statements I am sure the question which arises in your mind must be, *'Why after 20 years did I leave the Christian religious community?'* It is my feeling that every person owes a great duty to God to try to follow His teachings and live within His laws. Being *born and educated in a Christian country,* I was actively trying to fulfill my obligations to God in the only way available.

The Veil is Lifted

But as I grew older and matured I found many Christian teachings and doctrines I could not *justify to myself.* Through my studies in regard to the Middle East I became interested in Islam. I read everything I could find, which only made me want and desire to know more.

The Duty to Spread Islam

When speaking to a person who is not of the faith of Islam, it is necessary to realize that one of our duties is to *spread the word of Islam,* and to carefully explain what we believe in and why. Unless we ourselves are well educated not only in the teaching of the Qur'an but also in the Ahadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), we speak with weak authority. How can we possibly explain to a Christian world and to unbelievers that *the way of Islam is the only path of righteousness* if we are not well educated in Islam?

Christian Childhood Teachings Create Gulf in Mind

One must remember also, when speaking to a Christian that a great majority of Christians were taught Bible teachings in Sunday school as children. If you make statements and you are unable to give the source of your reference with a logical viewpoint, you will soon find that their *childhood teachings will create a gulf which you will not be able to span.*

The Creed of Islam

It has been highly recommended that the creed of faith (*iman)* is an excellent beginning for conversation with a non-Muslim.

'I have believed in Allah, in His angels, in His scriptures, in His Prophets, the day of Judgement, and the determination of good and evil from Allah and in the resurrection after death.'

Christian Exception to Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him)

I believe most Christians will tell you that they believe in the same basic statements of the Iman with the one exception of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) being the messenger of Allah. The Qur'an says, *'O ye who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer, for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.' 2:153.*

Theory of Trinity and Son ship of Jesus (peace be upon him) Established 325 Years after Jesus

The largest theological separation between the Muslim world and Christianity is the theory of the sons hip of Jesus and the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon them). The majority of the Christians are not aware that until the *Nicea Council of 325 AC the sonship of Jesus (peace be upon him) and the theory of the Trinity were not established church doctrine.* Even armed with this historical fact, most Christians will not take the time or the effort to research this fact. They will repeat what they can read in the Bible they have.

Oft-Quoted Bible Editions

The King James edition and the Saint Joseph Catholic editions of the Holy Bible are the most widely quoted sources of Christian doctrines. Few people in the non-Muslim world have taken the time and effort to know *the history* of how their Bible came to be in its *present form* and what *stages of change* it has undergone.

Difference in the Four Gospels

It is very interesting to note the difference between the carefully documented Hadiths and the first four gospels of the New Testament. The four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John report the actions of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) during his ministry. A reading of these four gospels *will plainly show the differences* in view between the different authors.

Book Written More than Half a Century after Jesus (Peace be upon him)

The books of the Bible *were written 50-60 years after Jesus (PBUH),* and the events which they were relating and yet they are accepted beliefs of the non-Muslims and a few of the statements by which they will challenge you.

Islamic Literature Needed in English

The very nature of Islam is foreign to the average non-Muslim due to *a lack of available material* in this country. The fact that the prayers are done in Arabic rather than in English further complicates the situation and creates a language barrier to most English speaking people. Only through *the clear explanation of our faith to non-Muslims* can we bridge the gap and create an atmosphere of acceptability.

Non-Muslim Attitude to Salat

After introducing a non-Muslim to the principles of faith, it is but one step further to the second Pillar of Islam, the Salat or Prayers. People, who are members *either active or inactive* of a Western Church, will find that a Muslim being required praying at least five times each day is a strange concept of worship. Part of the problems facing the western world is the speed by which the society paces itself. To stop all activities for prayers five times each day is viewed by many as a waste of precious time.

Feeling of Submission and the Road to Peace

Describing the form, series of actions, motions and the recitations will help the non-Muslim to understand the importance and reason why it is necessary through prayers to gain the feeling of submission. By *regular* observation of prayers, one can gain the *feeling of peace, a feeling of being in the presence of Allah and receive strength to carry on the daily task of living.*

Allah Needs Not our Prayers

It should be stressed that while Allah does not need our prayers we cannot survive without His blessings and guidance. Qur'an says, *'O you who believe! Seek help with patient perserverance and prayer, for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.' 2:153.*

A Muslim Explains

A very good friend of mine and a good Muslim explained to me about the prayers in a beautiful way. He said, '*Going to Allah in prayer is like going to a crystal clear pool of water when you are very thirsty. Early in the morning upon rising you may drink and receive the benefits of the cool waters, but by noon your body requires more liquid, so it is time for you to return to the refreshing waters. Late in the early afternoon, and in the later afternoon and finally in the evening, your body will cry out for more water. Prayer is like this water, without returning of ten into the presence of Allah our souls will cry out and the evils around us will dry and crackle our souls.'*

Women in Islam

The fact that the men and women pray separately will also surprise many. Almost al of the churches in this country allow its members to sit wherever they wish for the church service and the congregational prayers. The *Quaker church* is one which *separates its members by sex.* However, in the Southern Middle Western United States, the population of Quakers is not very large.

Renewing the Faith in the One and Only God

Possibly the largest denomination of faith in this area of the country is the Baptist Church of which there are many different branches. I reside in Fort Worth and there are *40 different types of churches* listed in the telephone directory. So, as you can see, this country is not starving for the need of another church or belief, but *what is needed is a renewing of its faith in the one only God.*

No Priesthood in Islam

A second vast different between Islam and Christianity is the structure of the clergy. The structure of the Christian churches is very impressive in regard to the thousands of ordained pastors, appointed or elected deacons and paid or volunteer church workers.

Islam does not have an established structure and does not need the large number of clergy required to explain on a daily or weekly basis the church beliefs and doctrines to its members. Allah directs the lives of the Muslim community through their daily prayers, daily study of the Qur'an and Juma or Friday community prayers. The members of many Islamic communities have found it convenient to also hold community prayers combined with instructions for the children and other interested person on Sunday. It is my belief the Sunday should be used as a day for visiting other Muslim families or friends and for the spreading of Islam either through instruction or by example.

A Shining Example

I believe it is very important that not only do we believe in the laws of Islam, but that our lives should be a shining example. A shining example that Islam is correct and can be the solution to not only our daily problems of life but the solution of world problems. Allah (God) sees our every action and deed. Also, our lives directly influence the lives of those surrounding us. During a period of *10 years* I was an *active member of the Baptist Church* teaching to my Sunday School class, one of my most frequently used phrases was, 'If after meeting someone for 5 minutes, he or she cannot tell that you are a good Christian—you are not presenting the correct image.' I honestly believe that the *same philosophy holds* true in my life today. If I am successful in my life today, everyone I meet will have a good impression of my character, my religion, and my person.

Reason for Prejudice against Muslims

There is a great need for the presentation of more general knowledge about Islam. In this country exists a definite lack of knowledge and explanation of the Muslim point of view. This lack of knowledge contributes to the attitude of *prejudice, narrow-mindedness and even hostility* towards the Muslims community.

Allah Has Not Left Man Without Guidance

There are many different denominations stating belief in a Supreme deity, most will agree on one point. The knowledge of God is not accessible to man through any process of logical deductions, application of reason, faculty of intuition or scientific methodology. Muslims believe however, *Allah (God) had not left man without guidance* about the nature of his moral responsibility and his relationship to his creator and sustainer of his life. Form Allah (*God)*, Himself, has come this guidance, through the many messengers or prophets, who have been raised by Allah (*God*) among men. These unique messengers were capable of obeying and delivering Allah's message

exemplifying Divine guidance to their particular society, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) was God's Last Messenger to all Mankind.

Last Messenger

We believe that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was *the last messenger,* evidenced by the fact that Allah's message was revealed at a period in history when the text could be *preserved intact without alteration.* The Holy Qur'an was the message revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Beauty of the Holy Qur'an

Prophet Muhammad was *an unlettered man,* who was incapable of reading or writing; yet scholars have attempted in vain to duplicate the *clarity of thought* and *beauty of Language* in the Qur'an. The Qur'an as it was revealed to the prophet was written down and many of the prophet's followers *memorized* the communications. Later after the Prophet's death the *1st Caliph was responsible for an authentic copy of the entire text* being compiled, carefully compiling the texts written and held by different follower with the texts which had been memorized by the followers. One of the bound copies called the *Mus'haf* is still in existence in *Tashkent, Russia.* An early 1900 publication of this edition has clearly proven that the Holy Qur'an is as pure and true in 1973 as it was at the time of its revelation.

By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them

We believe that there have been many prophets during the existence of the world. The Qur'an as does the Bible notes there are false prophets, who could lead the people away from worshipping the one true God. In order to clarify and distinguish true and false prophets, it is necessary to study a prophet's life, his deed, worlds, and integrity and to judge what the results of his teachings were. From the teachings of such prophets as Abraham, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them all), we see the characteristics of virtue as incorruptibility, justice, honor, integrity, patience and moral courage. *All* these teachers taught *Allah is One, that He alone was to be worshipped. His laws obeyed, and that man had a definite moral responsibility toward his creator.* Jesus Christ as stated in John 16:12-13, foretold of the coming of a prophet: *'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear then now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.* This verse of scripture appears to have instigated two different theories to mankind. The teachings of the Prophet Jesus after almost 2,000 years, after many translations and editing have come to be represented throughout the Christian teachings as the spirit of the Holy Ghost being spoken about. *Yet Jesus did not mention a spirit of truth, his exact words were reported to be 'When he, the spirit of truth is come.'*

Muhammad (PBUH) the Spirit of Truth

We, as Muslims, believe this prophecy was a *direct announcement* about the spirit of truth, which was the *Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).* The Prophet,

the comforter, the spirit of truth was born in 571 CE during a period when the world had *distorted the message* of the true religion. The prophet preached to an evil world the religion of the one and only God among a people full of corruption.

Purity of Body and Soul

His life was a shining example of *kindness, humility, honesty, justice and purity of body and soul.* Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) like the prophets of Allah before him was affronted by the established type of religion, wealthy influential factions to whom he became a threat. Yet, thousands have come to realize the spirit of truth and submit their lives to the straight path of righteousness and belief in only one God.

Guidance Par Excellence

From the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet, a Muslim is able to find *guidance concerning the daily problems of living* in our busy world. The *moral code of Islam* provides coverage of the smallest detail of domestic life as well as the broad aspects of national and international behavior. Islam prescribes *standard universal morals* which are *permanent* and furnish the means of determining good and evil conduct. Islam seeks to firmly implant in man's heart the strongest conviction that his every thought and action are with Allah, who sees him at *all times and in all places.* A person may successfully deceive the whole world but no man is capable of deceiving Allah in regard to his true intentions.

Code of Ethics

Islam deals with the basic human desires, wants and needs with enlightened knowledge into man's thoughts. Islam presents a code of ethics of the now living every day circumstances, not just regulations by which to try to obtain Heaven. Muslims are *taught how to live a daily life* in preparation for a life in heaven.

The Family Unit

The *foremost* institution of human society is the family unit. Each generation of human society has the *responsibility* of *preparing the succeeding generations* for service to human civilization and for the discharging of its obligations to society as a whole. By reading any newspaper we can plainly see the family units of the modern world are not upholding its responsibilities to create a strong foundation. A strong foundation is needed for the development, prosperity and growth of civilization. Islam devotes much attention to this important social unit, the family. The correct form of relationship between man and woman is marriage and irresponsible behaviour is *not condoned as innocent pastimes of ordinary behavior.*

Social Relationship in Islam

Islam *carefully restricts* activities which encourage the free mixing of men and women, questionable music, pictures, and the spreading of obscentities and pornography. These restrictions do not require a ruling by the Supreme Court to tell a

society whether they are good or bad. In Islam our laws are all based upon the supreme authority of the one and only God. Yet, restrictions upon society by Islam are *not designed to limit the growth of individualism* but rather *to protect and strengthen* the family unit.

No Castes in Islam

In Islam *all distinctions* of caste and community for marriage between Muslims have been removed. It is the intention of the Muslim societies that marriage be easily obtainable and extramarital behavior be almost impossible. A country of individual personal freedoms does not have to be a country of easy morals.

Love, Understanding and Mutual Respect

Within the family unit, Islam has assigned the position of authority to the man as the chief of his household. This authority is *not meant to be abused* thus creating an oppressor or tyrant. Islam expects the wife to obey and to look after the comforts and well-being of her husband and household. The world obey is *not used to define the role* of a helpless chattel or oppressed female, but rather a *helpmate and vice-President* of the organization. According to Islam, the real spirit of marital life is live, understanding and mutual respect.

The children also, have the responsibility of behaving with proper conduct and behavior toward all members of the family organization. Love and co-operation is required for every Muslim in regard to all members of mankind.

When We Fast by Choice Allah Remembers Our Suffering

The third Pillar of Islam, the Fasting or the Sawm, is observed once each year during the month of Ramadan. There are several very good publications available in this country on the *spiritual and physical* values which can be derived by fasting. Hunger whether it is by choice, doctor's orders, fasting or the lack of money, the pain is the same. *But when we fast by choice and obey Islamic Law, Allah remembers our sufferings.*

Zakat

The fourth Pillar, the Poor-due, Zakat, should present very little problem in conversation as most religions require of its members payment of charity, for the poor and the general expense of the church. Christian doctrines recommend of its members one-tenth of their wages or earnings. This is called a tithe meaning 10%. This is a voluntary donation in almost all cases. In Islam Zakat is 2.5%of the *annual savings above a specified limit of basic needs.*

Hajj

The fifth Pillar is the Hajj. The careful explanation of the reason behind Hajj and a story of the sights and sounds of going to Mecca will or should hold the interest of most listeners. Through the media of television, the Middle East is no longer the land

of Alladin and the Magic Lamp, but a very real land about which most people have some small knowledge.

Islam the Straight Path

The Western world has *many misconceptions* regarding the basic beliefs of Islam and exactly what Islam is. It will be only *through our efforts yours and mine—to share our knowledge, the knowledge that will bring to light the truth of following the straight path.*

Most Successful Community

We of the Muslim community should be the *happiest, most fulfilled, most successful and the hardest-working* members of our communities and towns. Why—*because we have the promise of Allah, the Merciful,* that if we strive to do His will, He will reward our efforts.

Proud to be a Muslim

After research and many prayers, it is *my hope* that in some small way my comments will bring a better insight and understanding as to why I, a convert, and millions of others are proud to say, *'We are Muslims living within the laws of Islam.'*

S. M. SULAYMAN

(FORMER BAPTIST CHURCH MINISTER)

(U.S.A.)

There is an amazing number of things which the Christian leader of the New Testament misses even in the most thorough reading, because his frame of reference and his scrutiny are controlled carefully by official Church dogma. My own case is instructive. I was raised and baptized in the Baptist church and spent much of my youth seriously studying the Bible and religious discipline. At a still young age, I entered the Ministry. I thought I knew the Bible well. As paradoxical as it seems, I must admit that I never possessed as complete knowledge of the Bible as a Christian as I have gained since embracing Islam. The reason is that, in general, the Christian interpretation presents a puzzle with major parts missing and those parts can be supplied only by Islam. The Christian sees the Bible as an end in itself, whereas in reality it is but an indicator pointing the way to something else which was then yet to come. Until this even occurred, the Bible was an incomplete, unfulfilled Book and many of its profound prophecies could not be grasped completely. Christian theologians and scholars, eager to impress their following, often erred in assigning premature "fulfillments" to those foregleams of the future. When the prophecies actually came true these erroneous conjectures had assumed the status of dogma, blinding Christians to the fruition of their own beliefs.

An exceptional example of the dangers of such hasty interpretation is the standard Christian exegesis of John 14:16 and 17, and 16:7-14. Giving Christian scholars the benefit of the doubt, we will assume that the accepted Greek text records in general the actual sayings the Jesus, peace by upon him. In these verses, Jesus highlights the brevity of his own mission, showing its intermediate status as a link between the prophetic past and the prophetic future. It is significant that Jesus never called himself the last prophet, or even a universal prophet, though Christians later came to consider him as both. On the contrary, here, when read carefully with regard to the Greek text rather than the creeds of the Establishment Churches, Jesus points specifically to the coming of another prophet after him who would (1) be eminently truthful and trustworthy, (2) teach only what God revealed, and (3) honor Jesus by carrying the prophetic mission on to its logical conclusion.

A characteristic of what is termed biblical prophecy is that it merely gives outlines which become perfectly distinct only upon the unfolding of reality. Thus, we have no instance here of Jesus saying, in the unreal fashion of the Italian "Gospel of Barnabas", 'After me there shall come the Last Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah.' But biblical prophecy does have certain safeguards which make the intended interpretation sure beyond all doubt. The New Testament records Jesus as saying.

“Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me…I go to prepare a place for you… and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (Greek *parakleetos*), that he may abide with you for ever: even the spirit of truth”. (John 14: 1, 16, 17).

Jesus says that the prophet who would come after him would be a true messenger commissioned by God who, like Jesus, would possess a heavenly Revelation from God, teaching, not words of his own composition, but whatever God gave him to speak.

“But when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you in all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear (from God) that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine and shall show unto you.” (John 16:13, 14).

Thus, additionally, this coming prophet would not spurn the mission of Jesus, but would recognize it and actually “glorify” Jesus by removing from association with him all the false doctrines with which others surrounded the name. Unlike the Jews is general, this prophet would not belie the mission of Jesus, but take the prophetic mission on to conclusion. Now, who would this be? Jesus calls him the “Paraclete”. We cannot discount the opinion that what Jesus really said, in his own language of Aramaic, was nearer in meaning to the similar Greek word “periclyte,” “The Praised One,” and that “John” —an unknown writer in the second century of the Christian era—picked up “Paraclete” in error. However, until positive textual evidence is available, we shall continue to give the benefit of the doubt, because even in its admitted defective condition, the light of truth shines forth in it with starting brilliance.

For centuries, based on the King James’ Version. Christendom has translated “Paraclete” as “the Comforter”, though that is not precisely what “paraclete” means. Even so, “Comforter” would be an acceptable title for the one who is the Mercy for all creatures. What “Paraclete” means, though, is an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another, one who counsels or advises. The word points to one who would be an advocate for and counselor to mankind, who, as the Qur’an puts it, would be *harisun alaikum,* “solicitous for your welfare”. (Likewise, in English “solicitor” is synonymous with “advocate” in the legal sense.) Another indication which acts as a safeguard for the true meaning of these verses is that the “Paraclete” is also given the title “Spirit of Truth” (Greek to *pneumatees aleetheais*). This is clear when one realizes that in New Testament Greek, *pneuma* can mean “possessor of a spiritual communication”, i.e., an inspired *person,* as well as “spirit” per se. (*A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament,* by the Rev. Thomas S. Green). Thus, to *pneuma tees aleetheasis,* “the inspired truthful one,” means that the “Paraclete” would be so truthful and trustworthy in discharging his responsibilities to the Divine Revelation that “The Truth” or “the Trustworthy” would be identifying titles for him. The Greek, *Aleethee*s corresponds exactly with the Arabic *Amin,* and *“Al-Amin”,* “the Trustworthy”, was an early title of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Some hasty editor was not satisfied with the expression "spirit of truth", or did not understand it, and assumed that this must be the same as the "Holy Spirit". The words at John 14:26 which identify the "Paraclete" as the Holy Spirit are the result of this. Such words are found nowhere else and are obviously an addition to the text. Yet, this premature interpretation, unsound textually, is the one generally accepted by the Church for explaining who the "Paraclete" is! But Jesus has spoken of someone who would dwell physically with mankind, advising and counseling them, in effect "pleading there case" with God and showing them to sure way of return, by adherence to the truth, to the Divine Judge. He was not someone who was already present, but someone yet to come. As for the Holy Spirit, the angel of revelation, his presence was already manifesting. David knew him, and asked God, "Take not Thy holy spirit from me." (Psalm 51:11). The Holy Spirit was present already during the ministry of Jesus, a fact which the New Testament acknowledges abundantly (f. Matthew 3:16, 17; 12:27-33, etc.) It would have been ridiculous and redundant for Jesus to speak of the future coming (He shall/will give you…") of what presently existed.

Jesus points to a fundamental distinction between the "Paraclete" and all other prophets: "that the may abide with you for ever." This is the same as saying: "the last Prophet whose mission has permanence, voiding the need for any additional prophets.' In plain English, jesus is saying: 'Look, I must go away soon, my mission among you having been completed. But I will ask our Lord to send for all of you another counselor the prophet who will stand as you guide until the end of time.'

To prove conclusively that "John" understood the "Paraclete" to be a flesh and blood person, not a disembodied spirit or an angel, in another New Testament book attributed to him (1 John 2:1) he used the same term with reference to Jesus: "We have an advocate (*Greek parakleetos,* same word rendered "Comforter" earlier) with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous." Jesus, as God's messenger, was considered to be a "Paraclete", the term was thus not understood by early Christians to mean someone supernatural. The fact is that "Paraclete" or "Counsellor" or "Advocate" refers to a human being, an inspired person—which is a legitimate meaning of *Pneuma*—not a "spirit" per se. In practical terms, the meaning of "Paraclete" is nearly synonymous with "prophet", with emphasis on the *teaching and counseling* aspects of Prophethood. If Jesus said "another Paraclete" at Johan 14:16, the significance is "another prophet, out-standing for his teaching and counseling." Furthermore, Jesus qualifies this "Paraclete" by terming him the one to "abide…for ever," the last or permanent one. There is yet another possibility for the serious researcher. There are numerous instances in the history of biblical textual transmission wherein words have been *omitted* inadvertently from those texts by copyists, especially where the letters of the omitted word were similar to another word which preceded or followed it. In the ancient texts, the letters were all run together, without spacing, so that Jesus' words at John 14:16 would have looked like this in the Greek text:

KAIEGOEROOTEESOOTONPATERAKAIALLONPARAKLEETONDOOSEIMN.

Later, words were spaced so that we have:

DAI EGO EROOTEESOO TON PATERA KAI ALLON PARAKLEETON DOOSEI UMIN.

(And I will ask the father, and he will give you another Paraclete.")

The point is that the received Greek text's "Paraclete" may not be a corruption of "periclyte". The original text might well have contained both words, but one became omitted in later copying because of being so close in position and in spelling to the other. Only further research can resolve the matter, but it is quite possible that what Jesus said originally was along these lines:

"I will request our Lord, and He will send you another Counsellor, the Praised one, who will be permanent for you until the end of time."

T's is not entirely hypothetical; it has actually happened with other words and sentences of the Greek New Testament.

Nevertheless, there is no one else in all of history that John 14:16et seq. could refer to but Muhammad bin Abdullah, peace be upon him. Christians admit that these verses do not refer to Jesus himself, and the premature identification of the "Paraclete" with the Holy Spirit is untenable in view of other verses of the Bible. Further, no one else has come as a prophet *giving due recognition to the mission of Jesus ("He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine…")* (John 16:14). No one else has led mankind into "all truth" (John 16:13). Only one man stands as Counsellor and Advocate ("Peraclete") for mankind for all the ages to come, Praised ("Pariclyte") by God and some 1000 millions of the human family.

YUSUF ISLAM

(U.S.A.)

How I Came To Islam

(Formerly Cat Stevens)

All I have to say is all what you know already, to confirm what you already know, the message of the Prophet as given by God—the Religion of Truth. As human beings we are given a consciousness and duty that has placed us at the top of creation. Man is created to be God's deputy on earth and it is important to realize the obligation to rid ourselves of all illusions and to make our lives a preparation for the next life, anybody who misses this chance is not likely to be given another, to be brought back again and again, because it says in Quran Majeed that when man is brought to account, he will say, "O Lord, send us back and give us another chance."

The Lord will say, if I send you back will do the same.

My Early Religious Upbringing

I was brought up in the modern world of all the luxury and the high light of slow business. I was born in Christian home but we know that every child is born in his original nature, it is only his parents that turn him to this or that religion. I was given this religion (Christianity) and thought this way. I was taught that God exists, but there was no direct contact with God, so we have to make contact with Him through Jesus, he was in fact that door to God. This was more or less accepted by me, but I did not swallow it all.

I looked at some of the statues of Jesus; they were just stones with no life "And when they said that God is three, I was puzzled even more but could not argue. I more or less believed it, because I had to have respect for the faith of my parents.

POP STAR

Gradually I became alienated from this religious upbringing. I started making music. I wanted to be a big star. All those things I saw in the films and on the media took hold of me, and perhaps I thought this way my God, the goal of making money.

I had an uncle who had a beautiful car "Well," I said, "he has it made," he had a lot of money. The people around me influenced me to think that this was it, this world was their God.

I decided then that this was the life for me, to make a lot of money, have a "great life". "Now my examples were the pop stars, I started making songs, but deep down I had a feeling for humanity, a feeling that if I became rich I will help the needy (it says in the Quran, we make a promise, but when we make something we want to hold on to it and become greedy).

So what happened was that I became very famous, I was still a teenager, my name and photo were splashed in all the media. They made me larger than life, so I

wanted to live larger than life and the only way to do that was to be intoxicated (with liquor and drugs).

IN HOSPITAL

After a year of financial success and "high" living, I became very ill, contracted TB and had to be hospitalized. It was then that I started to think what was to happen to me? Was I just a body and my goal in life was merely to satisfy this body? I realized now that this calamity was a blessing given to me by Allah, a chance to open my eyes. "Why am I here, why am I in bed?," and I started looking for some of the answers. At that time there was great interest in the Eastern mysticism I began reading and the first thing I began to become aware of was of death, and that the soul moves on, it does not stop. I felt I was taking the road to bliss and high accomplishment I started mediating and even became a vegetarian. I now believed in "peace and flower power", and this was the general trend. But what I did believe in particular was that I was not just a body, this awareness came to me at the hospital.

One day when I was walking and I was caught in the rain, I began running to the shelter and then I realized, "wait a minute, my body is getting wet, my body is telling me I am getting wet". This made me think of a saying that he body is like a donkey and it has to be trained where it had to go otherwise the donkey will lead you where it wants to go.

Then I realized I had a will, a God given gift; follow the will of God. I was fascinated by the new terminology I was learning in the Eastern religion. By now I was fed up with Christianity. I started making music again and this time I started reflecting own thoughts. I remember the lyric of one of my songs. It goes like this: "I wish I knew, I wish I knew what makes the Hell, Do I get to know You in my bed or some dusty cell while others reach the big hotel?" and I knew I was on the Path.

I also wrote another song "The way of find God out," I became even more famous in the world of music. I really had a difficult time because I was getting rich and famous and at the same time I was sincerely searching for the Truth. Then I came to a stage where I decided that Buddhism is alright and noble, but I was not ready to leave the world. I was to attached to the world and was not prepared to become a monk and to isolate myself from society.

I tried Zen and Ching, numerology, tarat cards and astrology. I tried to look back into the Bible and could not find anything. At this time I did not know anything about Islam and then, what I regarded as a miracle occurred. My brother had visited a mosque in Jerusalem and was greatly impressed that while on the one hand it throbbed with life (unlike the churches and synagogues which were empty), on the other hand, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility prevailed.

THE QURAN

When he came to London he brought back a translation of the Quran, which he gave to me. He did not become a Muslim, but he felt something for this religion, and thought I might find something in it also.

And when I received the book, (a guidance that would explain everything to me: who I was? What was the purpose of life? What was the reality and what would be the reality, and where I came from?) I realized that this was the true religion—religion not in the sense the West understands it, not the type for only your old age.

In the West whoever wishes to embrace a religion and make it his only way of life is deemed a fanatic. I was not a fanatic; I was at first confused between the body and the soul. Then I realized that the body and soul are not apart and you don't have to go to the mountain to be religious; we must follow the will of God, then we can rise even higher than the angles. The first thing I wanted to do now was to be a Muslim.

I realized that everything belongs to God, that slumber does not overtake Him. He created everything. At this point I began to lose pride in me, because hereto I had thought the reason I was here was because of my own greatness. But I realized that I did not create myself, and the whole purpose of my being here was to submit to the teaching that had been perfected by the religion was know as Al-Islam.

At this point I started discovering my faith. I felt that I was a Muslim, on reading the Quran. I now realized that all the Prophets sent by God brought the same message. Whey then wee the Jews and Christians different? I knew now how the Jews did not accept Jesus as the Mesiah and that they had changed His Word. Even the Christians misunderstand God's Word and called Jesus the son of God. Every thing made so much of sense. This is the beauty of the Quran; it asks you to reflect and reason, and not to worship the sun or moon but the One who had created everything. The Quran asks man to reflect upon the sun and moon and God's creation in general. Do you realize how different the sun is from the moon? They are at varying distances from the earth, yet appear the same size to us; at times one seems to overlap the other.

Even when many of the astronauts go to space, they see the insignificant size of the earth and vastness of space, they become very religious, because they have been seen the Signs of Allah.

When I read the Quran further; it talked about prayer, kindness and charity. I was not a Muslim yet, but I felt that the only answer for me was the Quran, and God has sent it to me and, I kept it a secret.

But the Quran also speaks on different levels. I began to understand it on another level, where the Quran says "Those who believe don't take disbelievers for friends and the believers are brothers". Thus at this point I wished to meet my Muslim brothers.

CONVERSION

Then I decided to journey to Jerusalem (as my brother had done). At Jerusalem, I went to the mosque and sat down. A man asked me what I wanted. I told him I was a Muslim. He asked what was my name, I told him "Stevens", he was confused. I then

joined the prayer though not so successfully. Back in London, I met a sister called Nafisa. I told here I wanted to embrace Islam and she directed me to the New Regent Mosque. This was in 1977, about 1-1/2 years after I received the Quran. Now I realized that I must get rid of my pride, get rid of Iblis and face one direction. So on a Friday, after Jummah I went to the Imam and declared my faith (the Kalima) at his hands. You have before you someone who had achieved fame and fortune. But guidance was something that eluded me, no matter how hard I tried until I was shown the Quran. Now I realize I can get in direct contact with God, unlike Christianity or any other religion. As one Hindu lady told me, “You don’t understand the Hindus, we believe in one God, we use these objects (idols) to merely concentrate. “What she was saying was that in order to reach God one has to create associates, that are idols for the purpose. But Islam removes all these barriers, the only thing that moves the believers from the disbelievers is the salat. This is the process of purification.

Finally I wish to say that every thing I do is for the pleasure of Allah and pray that you gain some inspirations from my experiences. Furthermore, I would like to stress that I did not come into contact with any Muslim before I embraced Islam. I read the Quran first and read the Quran first and realized no person is perfect, Islam is perfect, and if we imitate the conduct of Prophet we will be successful. May Allah give us guidance to follow the path of Ummah of Muhammad. Ameen ! Islam Our Choice

This stirring account should stimulate the Muslims, especially the youth, to derive inspiration from it and discard their shackles of inferiority complex which is one of the primary reasons preventing many from practicing Islam.

To remain steadfast in upholding Islam according to the example set by our beloved Nabi is certainly the means of obliterating one’s sins, as Allah says in the Qur’an:

“LO GOOD DEEDS ANNUL ILL-DEEDS”

I fervently make the du’aa- and request all readers to do likewise –for the guidance of each and every individual of the Ummah such that the ways of our beloved Nabi becomes instilled and embedded within the heart making it more sacred and precious than any other custom of fashion.

KNOW THY LORD

He is God,
There is no God but He.
He is the Knower of the unseen and the visible
He is the All-merciful, the All-compassionate.

He is God
There is not God but He.

He is the King, the All-Holy, the All-peaceable;
The All-faithful the All-preserver
The All-mighty, the All-compeller
The All-subline.
Glory be to God, above that they associate!

He is God,
The Creator, the Maker, the Shaper
To him belong the Names Most Beautiful.
All that is in the heavers and the earth magnifies Him:
He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.

(Hashr 59:22-24)



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